ANGLIÆ SPECULUM:

A

E.11.72

GLASS

That flatters not;

Presented to a Country Congregation at the late

SOLEMN FAST,

April 24. 1678.

In a PARALLEL between the KINGDOM of *ISRAEL* and *ENGLAND.*

Wherein the whole Nation is desired to behold and consider, our SIN, and our DANGER.

By a dutiful Son of this Church.

LONDON,

Printed for *Richard Royston*, Bookseller to His most Sacred MAJESTY, MDCLXXVIII.

1095.90

A GLASS

That flatters not;

Presented in a

SERMON

At the last Fast.

ISAIAH V.25. latter end.

For all this, his anger is not turned away, but his Hand is stretched out still.

WE are assembled here, by His Majesties *Proclamation*, to humble our selves before Almighty God, for the manifold sins and provocations of this Kingdom, to beg his blessing upon it, and to beseech him to avert his deserved Judgments from it.

In Order to which you have heard now read (in the firſt Leſſon for Morning Prayer this Day) another *Proclamation* from God himſelf, the King of Kings, directed particularly unto us his Miniſters, by the Mouth of his Prophet, *Iſaiah* 58. 1. ſaying, *Cry aloud, ſpare not, lift up thy Voice like a Trumpet, and ſhow my People their Tranſgreſſion, and the Houſe of* Jacob *their Sins.* For we cannot be humbled for our Sins, unleſs we know them; and unleſs we be ſenſible alſo how heynous they are; and how diſpleaſing to our Heavenly Father, who hath already teſtified, many ways, how much He is offended with us.

Now the beſt way to underſtand this, will be to conſider, what Sins they were which heretofore were moſt provoking to Him and deſtructive to others: cauſing Him to caſt off, even the whole Houſe of *Iſrael* and *Judah*; his own peculiar People, whom He had ſeparated to Himſelf from all Nations upon the Face of the Earth. Whoſe Condition is ſo like to that of ours here in *England*; that he is a Man of little obſervation, and of ſlow conception, who is not able to draw the reſemblance. If I ſhould endeavour to expreſs to the life, how God dealt with them, and how they requited Him; and again, how He corrected them for their Ingratitude; you would ſay, *This is England* under other names; or *Here is Iſrael* again revived. The ſame things are acted over again in the World; only the Scene is changed, and new Perſons are come upon the Stage.

I know no better way to affect your Hearts and to make you both underſtand my Text, and the dangerous condition wherein we are; than by preſenting

ſenting you with ſome few touches, at leaſt, of a Parallel between them and us.

I.

Firſt then if we conſider the Singular Priviledges, they enjoyed above other Nations, the Excellent Laws which God gave them, and the true Religion which was eſtabliſhed and for a time flouriſhed among them; you may eaſily find ſomething to match them here in *England*. Which is a Country, that other People have admir'd more than our ſelves; for the Excellent Frame of our Government, for the Liberty of its Inhabitants, and eſpecially for the Enjoyment of the Bleſſed Gospel of Chriſt in great Purity, Cleerneſs and Splendor; which hath continued many Years.

II.

And if we conſider *Secondly*, what ſtrange deliverances God vouchſafed that People, whom He had made ſo near to himſelf; and thoſe both upon the Sea and upon the Land; we are not without ſome reſemblance to them upon that account: having been a People very often ſaved by the Lord, who hath marvellouſly preſerved us, when we were in great danger of being ſwallowed up, by ſeveral Enemies of our Peace and Happineſs. They have been wonderfully defeated in their open Hoſtilities; and no leſs miraculouſly diſappointed in their Secret Plots and Conſpiracies: Witneſs, in the Days of our Fathers, the Spaniſh Invaſion, and the Gun-powder Treaſon, which can ſcarce be parallel'd in any Story; and the ſtrange Reſtauration of his preſent Majeſty, to the aſtoniſhment and confuſion of his ſworn, inſolent Enemies; of which our own Eyes have been the Witneſſes.

And it were well for us if we could ſtop here, and be able to carry on this Parallel no further; if we could only recount the great Favours and Kindneſſes of God to us, and admire at his unexpected Salvation which He ſent us, when, of our ſelves, we were utterly helpleſs. But alas! We muſt confeſs alſo in the third place,

III.

That as their Ingratitude to God was exceeding great, and their Rebellion moſt ſhameful againſt him, who had been kind above meaſure to them: So we have equalled, if not exceeded them in this; being a Nation prodigiouſly forgetful of his benefits, and that ſoon let his wonderful works ſlip quite out of our minds.

As it was ſaid of them (*Pſal.* cvi. 7.) that *they provoked God at the Sea, even at the Red-Sea*: That is, immediately after God had vouchſafed an extraordinary deliverance to them, from a very fierce Tyrant, they made no other uſe of it, but to take the Confidence to affront his Goodneſs: So may it be truly ſaid of us, *At the Reſtauration of the King and Kingdom, even at the Reſtauration of the King and Kingdom, we provoked him to Anger againſt us.* Inſtantly, I mean, after He had reſcued us from a miſerable, forlorn and confuſed condition, from the power of Uſurpers as inſolent as *Pharoah*; and had reſtored us to Peace and Settlement; we betook our ſelves to our old or worſe Wickedneſs; revolting moſt perfidiouſly from all the Vows we were apt to make in the time of our trouble; and behaving our ſelves ſo baſely and diſingenuouſly towards Him, that it is a wonder he hath indured us thus long, or that we dare

dare take the confidence to appear before him, and to expect any further favour from Him.

The Deſcription which the Prophet gives in the beginning of this Chapter, of the happy Eſtate of the *Jews* by the Divine Favour to them, is exceeding beautiful: and He no leſs lively ſets forth their Horrid Ingratitude to their Soveraign Benefactor. Read the *firſt* and *ſecond* Verſes, with this brief Expoſition of them, and you will ſcarce be able to refrain from thinking with your ſelves (though I ſhould make no compariſon) how like are we to them in every particular? He compares them to *a Vineyard in a very fruitful Hill*; which every one eaſily conceives is a repreſentation of the proſperous eſtate of the *Jews* in an exceeding rich Country, abounding with all delightful things. This Vineyard *He fenced*, or hedged in, by the Law (ſay the *Jews*) whereby He ſevered them from all other Nations; or by his ſpecial Providence, which was their Guard and Defence, ſecuring them from all invaſions while they obſerved his Law. *And He gathered out the Stones thereof* (as Men you know are wont to do, when they have a very choice peice of Ground) that is, caſt the Gods of Stone, and all their Worſhippers out of the Land of *Canaan*, as He did the Romiſh Superſtition out of this Kingdom. And *He planted it with the choiceſt Vine*; *Joſhua* and the Judges, that is, and a number of holy and gallant Men, came and took root in that Country; as ours alſo hath produced many choice and admirable perſons of all ſorts, who were the Glory of their times, in the Age before us. And then it follows, He *built a Tower in the midſt of it*, by which we may ſafely underſtand the famous

famous City *Jeruſalem*; which was in the heart and ſtrongeſt part of the Country. And *then He made a Winepreſs*, that is (we may probably conceive) the Sanctuary and the Altar, flowing with the Blood of the Sacrifices, and with their Drink-Offerings, which were poured upon them; and which He teſtified his acceptance of, by ſending down, at the firſt erection of it, Fire from Heaven to conſume them. And now after all this care He expected ſome fruit, as the next words tell us; *and looked that it ſhould bring forth Grapes.* But what did He find, when He came to examine how they had profitted under his Heavenly Culture? Behold, this Vineyard *brought forth* nothing but *wild* ſowr *Grapes*; which could not but be infinitely diſtaſteful to him: That is, all manner of Sin and Wickedneſs abounded among them. This was the effect of all his care and pains; they lived as if they had been a wild barbarous People, that were under no Laws, no Reſtraints, no Diſcipline in the World; but were left to follow meerly their brutiſh inclinations.

Shall I give you a Catalogue of thoſe Wicked Fruits, that all his Love and Kindneſs produced? And I will trouble you with no more than thoſe which the Prophet mentions in this Chapter; when he comes to explain and apply this Parable of the Vineyard. And he muſt wink very hard, who doth not ſee it to be a Map of thoſe very Crimes, which we have been guilty of in this Kingdom.

I.

Firſt, they were groſly unjuſt and unmerciful to their Neighbours, *Verſe 7. The Vineyard of the Lord of Hoſts is the Houſe of* Iſrael, *and the Men of* Judah *his*

his pleaſant plant: and he looked for Judgment, but behold Oppreſſion, and for Righteouſneſs, (or Mercy) *but behold a Cry.* Woeful lamentations, that is, and complaints of many Miſerable Wretches, who were undone by the great and powerful, who ſhould rather have protected and relieved them. Theſe were ſome of the Wild Grapes they brought forth. The very ſame with thoſe Rapines, and Spoils, and Plunderings, nay Sacriledges, which have been committed among us, (and not yet, it is to be feared, repented of) beſides all the violence and cruelty, which is every-where too common; and the private injuries that we have done one another.

II.

Then *Secondly*, follows their Inſatiable Covetouſneſs and greedy deſire of Riches, which was the cauſe of the other; that which provoked their hungry appetite to devour ſo many Houſes, and ſwallow up ſo much Treaſure. *Verſe* 8. *Wo to them that joyn Houſe to Houſe, that lay Field to Field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midſt of the Earth.* They were ſo ravenous, that is, as if that fertile Country were made for them alone; and they would have no body have any ſhare in it but themſelves. Such Cormorants, we need not go far to ſeek in all ſorts of Men among us in this ſinful Nation.

Then, after a terrible threatning *Verſe* 9, 10. againſt theſe Crimes (for the Sin of Oppreſſion, denying Men their right, or taking it from them, nay, greedineſs of wealth, and endleſs heaping one gainful place upon another, are highly diſpleaſing to the Juſt and Merciful Lord of the World) there follows in the third place, III. Their

III.

Their Gluttony, Drunkenneſs, and riotous Exceſs. V. 11. *Wo unto them that riſe up early in the Morning* (a thing very prepoſterous to begin the Day with a Debauch) *that they may follow ſtrong Drink; that continue till Night* (as if they would never give over as long as they could ſee) *till Wine inflame them.* And you know to what filthy ſins ſuch Beaſts are wont to be inflamed: nor need I tell you what impure Fires have burnt, nay raged among us; which, Wo be to us, are not yet extinguiſhed.

IV.

How ſhould they? When, as the Prophet proceeds to inform us, theſe ſins were attended among that People, with a hatred of all that was ſerious; even then when Gods Plagues, the tokens of his heavy diſpleaſure, were remarkable upon them. V. 12. Read it; for it is the very Picture of too many among our ſelves. *And the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and Pipe, and Wine are in their Feaſts: but they regard not the Work of the Lord, neither conſider the operation of his Hands.* As much as to ſay (if we put it into our Language) they love nothing but merriment and jollity, feaſting and dancing, Balls and Plays, treats and entertainments: but never regard what God is doing in the World, nor mind into how miſerable a condition their Country is already reduced by their folly. For, as it follows there, V. 13, 14. *Therefore the People were gone into Captivity, their honourable Men were famiſhed, and their Multitude* (i.e. the vulgar ſort) *were dried up with thirſt: Hell,* or the *Grave, inlarged her ſelf, and opened*

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ed her Mouth without meaſure (juſt as it did in the late devouring Peſtilence, which conſumed ſo many thouſands of us) nay, He threatens that *their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoyceth ſhould deſcend into it.* This madneſs, that is, will inevitably bring all to an end.

V.

For, *Fifthly*, they deviſed all ways to be wicked. It was a piece of Art, and Skill, to invent new Modes of Villany; and they took a great deal of pains to deſtroy themſelves and others. V. 18. *Wo to them that draw Iniquity with Cords of Vanity, and Sin as it were with a Cart-rope.* They were not meerly drawn in (as we ſay) to ſin, by the allurements of pleaſure and gain, and ſuch like things; but they drew in themſelves, and forced themſelves to be wicked; even when there was no inclination, in Nature to it. They ſtudied ſomething out of the common rode of wickedneſs; and, as if they loved wickedneſs for it ſelf, they dragg'd and haled ſome ſins into the Nation, to which Men had no mind. They ſet themſelves, as the Scripture ſpeaks, to do wickedly; and ſet themſelves to it with all their might. They made a very laborious buſineſs of it; and did violence to themſelves and others, to make them monſtrouſly impious. For that ſeems to be the meaning *of drawing Sin and Iniquity, as with a Cart-rope*: unto which, I doubt, too many have put their hands, and made it their work, in this ſinful Kingdom; as formerly in *Iſrael.*

VI.

And in this lewd courſe they were ſo impudently confident, that they mockt, as the Prophet next

of all relates, at thoſe who told them they were in any danger of being puniſhed for theſe impieties. They made themſelves pleaſant with ſuch Monitors, and laught and jeer'd even at the threatning of Gods Meſſengers: ſaying, (*V.* 19.) *Let him make ſpeed, and haſten his work that we may ſee it: and let the Counſel of the holy One of* Iſrael *draw nigh and come, that we may know it.* Which are words of abuſe, uttered by way of taunt and ſcorn, at thoſe who told them God would be avenged of them. They derided the Prophets, who ſaid God had pronounced a heavy ſentence upon ſuch evil-doers; and that a dreadful judgment was coming from the holy One of *Iſrael.* If He be ſo angry, ſaid they, why doth He ſtay ſo long? let us ſee what he can do: let him make more haſte in his executions, that we may know you to be his Prophets. And do you think there are no ſuch prophane Scoffers among our ſelves, who go on fearleſsly in their ſins; and dare the Divine vengeance to do his worſt againſt them? O that we were but thus innocent, as not to come within the reach of this *Wo,* which the Prophet denounces to all ſuch contemners of Gods threatnings!

VII.

The ground of all which obdurate wickedneſs was, that they had utterly confounded all the known notions of good and bad, right and wrong, holy and prophane, pure and unclean. Between which they made no diſtinction at all; but lookt upon them as Names, which had no real difference. That's the meaning of the 20*th. Verſe. Wo to them that call evil good,* (it is plainer in the *Hebrew* as you

you read in the Margin of the Bible,) *that ſay concerning evil it is good, and concerning good that it is evil: that put darkneſs for light, and light for darkneſs; that put bitter for ſweet, and ſweet for bitter:* that is, make no difference between theſe; but look upon thoſe things which we call Vertues and Vices, as Words and Fancies, there being, in their opinion, no ſuch qualities. Nothing is good but what fits the turn they have to ſerve, and nothing bad but what croſſes it. As much as to ſay, theſe Men laboured to dig up, by the very roots, all Principles of Conſcience, as a fooliſh ſcrupuloſity; and to introduce a perſwaſion that all things are alike lawful in themſelves, ſo that no body need conſult any thing elſe but his own pleaſure and ſafety. Which (it is no Libel to ſpeak it) is the very Character of that prophane, ungodly Crew, which in theſe later years have ſprung up among us in this Kingdom.

VIII.

And yet theſe very Men were wonderfully conceited of themſelves, and had an high opinion of their own wiſdom and skill, in managing affairs: as if buſineſs would go on with ſport and laughter, and flouting at others. Nay, they were confident they ſhould proſper; without maintaining any of thoſe old threadbare Notions of good and evil. Which ſeems to be the meaning of the next words, *V.* 21. *Wo unto them that are wiſe in their own Eyes, and prudent in their own ſight.* They will ſee, that is, e're long, what Idiots they are, that have ſo little underſtanding, as not to know the difference between falſhood and truth, fraud and upright dealing,

ing, oppreſſion and mercy, ſoberneſs and debauchery, devotion and utter neglect of all the Offices of Religion; which all Mankind have ever thought to be as oppoſite as light and darkneſs, ſweetneſs and bitterneſs. Wo be to them that are thus depraved, and have ſo perfectly loſt all ſpiritual ſenſe and taſte, that they can ſwallow any thing: and yet fancy themſelves very wiſe and prudent Men, if by any means, though never ſo vile, they can bring about their ends. Woful at laſt was the end of theſe Politicians, who truſted to ſuch weak and rotten Counſels.

IX. X.

Eſpecially ſince, *Ninthly*, they had no other valour but either that of drinking ſtoutly; Or, *Tenthly*, that of boldly perverting all publick juſtice. So the Prophet concludes their abominable Character, *V.* 22, 23. *Wo unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and Men of ſtrength to mingle ſtrong drink. Which juſtifie the wicked for reward, and take away the righteouſneſs of the righteous from him.* They were mighty Men at a Debauch; and reſolutely broke the eſtabliſhed Orders and Rules of common Right and Equity. For if they were intruſted with the Adminiſtration of Juſtice, they judged the Cauſes that were brought before them, not according to their merits, but as their hatred, or affection, or hope of gain directed them. Rich and powerful offenders eſcaped without any puniſhment, and the poor innocent could have no redreſs of the wrongs he ſuffered by them.

I might tell you alſo of the *Idolatry* whereby ſome had corrupted themſelves, (as this Prophet complains

plains in the firſt Chapter) and the foul *Hypocriſie* of others, who ſtill continued true Worſhippers: But then I ſhould exceed the limits wherein I promiſed to contain my ſelf, when I entred upon this Diſcourſe. The intention of which is to ſet before your Eyes thoſe ſins which brought a People, as dear to God as we can fancy our ſelves, to utter ruine: and to poſſeſs you with ſuch a dread of his Almighty diſpleaſure, that you may prepare your ſelves, by true repentance of your own particular ſins, to be humble ſupplicants to God for the whole Kingdom; which, we have too much reaſon to think, is defiled, if not with all, yet with moſt of theſe woful Crimes.

For certain it is that we are very like them in another regard; from which we may evidently conclude, that our Sins are of as deep a dye as theirs: In thoſe heavy Judgments, I mean, that God hath ſent upon us; which have a cauſe, no doubt, as weighty, and that can be none elſe but our crying Iniquities. And ſince God, as you have heard, hath made us ſo like them in his Benefits, in the enjoyment of which He hath alſo preſerved us, by wonderful Deliverances; and we have made our ſelves ſo like them in our Ingratitude, that it is hard to diſcern the difference between their Character and ours: What marvel is it, if there be a *Fourth* reſemblance between us; that is, in our Plagues?

IV. It is ſaid, I remember, in the 28*th.* of *Deuteronomy* (where *Moſes* foretels the Fate of *Iſrael*, if they ſinned againſt God.) *Verſe* 58, 59. *If thou wilt not obſerve to do all the Words of this Law that are written in this Book,*

Book, that thou mayeſt fear this glorious and fearful name THE LORD THY GOD; *then the* LORD *will make thy Plagues wonderful, and the Plagues of thy Seed, even great Plagues, and of long continuance, and ſore ſickneſſes and of long continuance.* Behold now, out of the records which the Prophet *Iſaiah* hath left us, how exactly this prediction of *Moſes* was fulfilled. For they having offended God by thoſe Sins before mentioned, *and caſt away his Law, and deſpiſed his Word; therefore* V. 25. *was the Anger of the Lord kindled againſt his people, and he ſtretched forth his Hand againſt them, and ſmote them: So that the Hills did tremble, and their Carcaſes were torn in the midſt of the Streets:* And *For all this* (ſaith my Text) *his Anger was not turned away*; but as the Plagues were great, ſo they were of long continuance, as *Moſes* had ſaid; *for his hand was ſtretched out ſtill.*

When one Judgment was paſt, then He ſent another to ſucceed it; as you may ſee if you look forward into the *Ninth* Chapter of this Prophecy, *V.* 11, 12. where the ſame ſad words are repeated again upon this Occaſion. They were ſo vain as to imagine themſelves ſecure (notwithſtanding all their Sins) from the Power of the *Syrians*, by the Aſſiſtance of *Tiglath Peleſar* the King of *Aſſur*; who was their Ally, and an Enemy to *Rezin* King of *Syria*. But even theſe Allies, and Confederates, in whom they confided, at the laſt turned againſt them. They from whom they expected Succour and Deliverance, proved their greateſt Adverſaries. *And ſo the* Syrians *before and the* Philiſtines *behind* (who always watched Occaſions to fall upon the *Iſraelites*, when they

they were in diſtreſs,) made a prey of them, and *devoured them with open mouth:* and yet, *for all this, his Anger was not turned away, but his hand was ſtretched out ſtill.*

He had not yet done with them, becauſe, as it follows *V.* 13. *The People turned not unto Him that ſmote them, neither did they ſeek the Lord of Hoſts.* They never heartily acknowledged their faults, nor went about to amend them. And therefore He proceeded to puniſh all the Senators, and the Prophets, and the leaders of the People, together with their young and valiant Men; nay the Fatherleſs and Widows and all: *becauſe every one was an Hypocrite, and an Evil-doer, and every Mouth ſpoke Villany* (as you may read *V.* 14, 15, 16, 27.) and yet *for all this his Anger was not turned away, but his Hand ſtretched out ſtill.*

How ſhould it be expected that He ſhould withdraw his Vengeance when they ceaſed not to provoke him? For, as it there follows, *wickedneſs burneth like Fire V.* 18. and ſo *through the Wrath of the Lord of Hoſts the Land was darkened V.* 19. Which ſeems to have been in the Days of *Senacherib* King of *Aſſyria:* when Manaſſeh *was againſt* Ephraim, *and* Ephraim againſt *Manaſſeh;* that is, ſome of the Kingdom of *Iſrael* joyned with the Enemy, and others oppoſed them; they could not agree among themſelves, but continued their Diviſions till all the ten Tribes were ſubdued; and then they were *all together joyned againſt* Judah *V.* 21. And yet *for all this his Anger was not turned away, but his Hand ſtretched out ſtill.*

Were not *Moſes* his words ſtrangely fulfilled, that their

their *Plagues ſhould be great, and of long continuance*? The Reaſon was, their Sins continued, the very ſame Sins for which they had thus ſmarted, as you read, *Ch.* 10. 1, 2, 3. So that after a New *Viſitation and a Deſolation which came from far*, (V. 4.) *his Anger was not turned away* (it is repeated there once more) *but his Hand was ſtretched out ſtill.* The truth is, it was ſtretched out ſo long againſt them, that they were brought to nothing; *Jeruſalem* it ſelf, that Impregnable Fortreſs, was laid in Aſhes, and *came down wonderfully*, as *Jeremiahs* words are in his *Lamentations* 1. 9. Which ſound to me as if he would have us underſtand, that not one tittle of *Moſes* his Prophecy failed; who ſaid that their Plagues ſhould be *wonderful:*

And what difference, I beſeech you, is there to be found between us and them, as their caſe ſtood in the Days of this Prophet *Iſaiah*? His words and thoſe of *Moſes* are verified again in this Kingdom; which hath lain under Plagues, great Plagues, and of long continuance. We that in former Days were the Admiration, if not the Envy, of our Neighbours for the Happineſs we enjoyed, became not long ago, an Aſtoniſhment, a Proverb, and a By-word, by reaſon of the many, very many and ſore Calamities, which fell upon us. Who hath forgotten the bloody and tedious VVar, wherein we were embroiled? when *the Land trembled, and our Carcaſes were torn in the Streets*? How dreadful is the remembrance of the ſlaughter of ſuch multitudes of brave men, by the Hand of their Neighbours? the dethroning, nay beheading of the beſt of Kings? the extirpation of Monarchy? the aboliſhing

liſhing of the Apoſtolical Epiſcopacy? the defacing of Holy Places; with all the reſt of the Miſerable Deſolations, which were wrought by our own fooliſh hands? And yet, *for all this his Anger*, it is apparent, *was not turned away, but his hand was ſtretched out ſtill.*

For after His Majeſties moſt happy Reſtauration, how ſoon were two Branches of the Royal Family lopped off? What Floods were there in moſt parts of the Realm, by immoderate Rains; which threatned a general ſcarcity of proviſions, and were a kind of preſage, of the deluge of calamities which were coming to ſweep us away? (It was the year after His Majeſties return to his Kingdom; and there was a general Faſt, I very well remember, appointed meerly for that reaſon:) *And yet, his anger was not turned away, but his hand was ſtretched out ſtill.*

For, not long after we were engaged in a new War; and that was accompanied with the greateſt Peſtilence that hath been known in this Nation. And yet, *for all this, his anger was not turned away, but his hand was ſtretched out ſtill.*

For, the next year followed a moſt dreadful Fire; which conſumed the Houſes, as the former Judgment had done the Inhabitants, of our Capital City. And yet, *for all this, his anger was not turned away, but his hand was ſtretched out ſtill.*

For, not long after, part of the Royal Navy, the Walls and Bullwarks of this Kingdom, were burnt in an ignominious and diſgraceful manner. And yet, *for all this, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill.* Our Plagues are of longer continuance; another War being commenced,

attended with a great number of ill ſucceſſes: as if the Lord ſhould ſay; I have not yet done with you, though all this evil be come upon you.

Why? what can be worſe than all this? when we may ſay with the Prophet concerning his People, *Iſa.* 1. 6. *From the ſole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no ſoundneſs,* in the body of this Realm, *but wounds and bruiſes and putrifying ſores: they have not been cloſed, neither bound up, nor mollified with Oyntment.* It is a great miſtake to interpret this, as Men commonly do, concerning their ſins: it is plain by what goes before, and follows after, that he deſcribes the grievouſneſs of their puniſhments; which were ſo many, and ſo great, that the body of the Kingdom was juſt like the body of a Man, who hath been beaten ſo long that you cannot find one part whole, where there is not a bruiſe, or a wound, or a putrifying ſore; and thoſe ſtrokes ſo continued, that there was no time to cloſe one wound, before another was made.

What a mortifying Spectacle is this? That is, in what a lamentable condition is this poor Nation, whoſe very Picture this ſeems to be? what can we expect but a total diſſolution of a body ſo wounded and putrified; for which we can find yet no Plaiſter, no healing? what can we expect, but that we ſhould fall wonderfully (as *Jeremiah* ſpeaks) our Plagues having been ſo wonderful?

For now at laſt, which ſeems to me the moſt wonderful thing that hath been mentioned, we are threatned with the danger of loſing our Religion; than which nothing ought to be dearer to us. I ſhould not have preſumed to ſay it, if His Majeſty had

had not told us ſo, in his Proclamation for the laſt general Faſt before this, *Feb.* 4. 1673. where we are invited to the ſame Duty we are now about, becauſe *the reſtleſs practiſes of the Romiſh Recuſants* (whoſe numbers and inſolencies His Majeſty there declares, are lately increaſed) *threaten a Subverſion both of Church and State.* So the words are in that Proclamation; without whoſe Authority, my ſmall acquaintance with the ſtate of affairs would have forbidden me to frighten you with ſo diſmal a Calamity: which all conſiderate Perſons cannot chuſe but look upon as the moſt fearful Plague that hath yet befallen us. It puts me in mind of the ſwarms of Locuſts which covered the Face of the Earth, and filled the Houſes of *Pharoah* and the Houſes of his Servants, and the Houſes of all the *Egyptians*, (*Exod.* 10. 5, 6.) which immediately preceded the Plague of thick and palpable darkneſs which overſpread the whole Country. And it may juſtly be thought a prodigious thing, that we ſhould be ſo ſleepy, ſo ſtupid, or ſo negligent and indifferent, as to ſuffer thoſe Romiſh Sorcerers to come ſo freely to bewitch us again with their Inchantments.

Are we become ſo ſottiſh, as to believe the Biſhop of *Rome* ought to have any Authority in this Kingdom? There are no ſtripes ſevere enough for ſuch Fools backs. VVhat? in this Age of Light and Learning? and in this Kingdom, where his Inſtruments have been ſo often convicted and ſtigmatized for Cheats and Cozeners? Are theſe Romiſh Factors come again in a confident and open manner to play their tricks, and to put off their pitiful VVares among us; as if we were blind *Indians*,

that will take their painted Glaſs and Bugles, for ſome great Jewels and Precious Stones? I cannot but ſay again, that this exceeds all wonder. It amazes my thoughts; and I cannot tell what to call the blindneſs wherewith we are ſtruck, if we let our ſelves be deceived by them.

Beloved; the Uſurpations of the Pope have been ſo viſibly expoſed to all Mens view in theſe later times; it hath been ſo manifeſtly proved that he hath been the greateſt diſturber of the Chriſtian VVorld by his incroachments; and the Maxims of the Jeſuites, who are the chief ſticklers for him, are ſo apparently horrid, and deſtructive to all Government, nay and good Manners; and their pretences that the Church of *Rome* is the ſole Catholick Apoſtolick Church, have been proved to be ſo frivolous, or rather ridiculous; that our Divines in the Reign of the laſt King, of bleſſed Memory, 'thought their Pranks to be diſcovered ſo plainly to 'the Eyes of all the People, and all their frauds and 'fooleries ſo fully detected, that they would not 'venture to appear here again with their Impoſtures 'and holy Trumperies; but rather go and play their 'Parts upon the Stages of *Japan* and *Mexico* among 'their new ſilly Converts, and not here in this 'Kingdom, where an Aſs is eaſily known from a 'Lion.

I find theſe very words in an Epiſtle to the Keeper of the Great Seal in thoſe dayes. And yet, it ſeems, they are as buſie here as ever; or rather more active: and they brag and vapour, we are told, in ſome places, as if we were all ready to ſubmit to them, by a blind obedience; and were but

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as ſo many unclean Beaſts, that will ſwallow all their Morſels without chewing.

O God! what Spirit of ſlumber is this, that is fall'n upon us? VVhat a Miſt have they caſt before our Eyes, that we cannot diſcern between things which ſo vaſtly differ? but are become ſuch tame and eaſie Fools, that they hope, it ſeems, to impoſe upon us that heavy Yoke, which our Fathers threw off, with ſo much reaſon and Chriſtian reſolution. This looks like a kind of fatal ſtupidity; that we ſo far follow the old *Iſraelites*, as to imitate them in their firſt provocation, by entertaining ſo much as a thought of returning back again into *Egypt*.

VVhat ſhall we aſſign to be the cauſe of all theſe Divine Judgments; and that there is ſo little hope to ſee any concluſion of them? But after all this is come upon us, his anger is not yet turned away, but his hand is ſtretched out ſtill; and ſhakes ſuch a Rod over us, that all the former are no more to be compared with it, than the VVhip of *Solomon*, to the Scorpions wherewith the *Iſraelites* were threatned to be chaſtiſed by *Rehoboam*?

It can be none elſe, but our foul ingratitude to our moſt gracious God and merciful Father; and our bringing forth no better Fruit, than that Vine-yard did, which his own right hand had Planted. *We are a ſinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquity* (as *Iſaiah* complains of them, *chap.* 1. 4.) *a Seed of evil doers, Children that are corrupters, who are gone away backward*; which may juſtly provoke him to continue our puniſhments, and to ſend us ſuch *ſtrong deluſion, that we ſhould believe a Lye; ſeeing we received not the truth in the love of it, but had*

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had pleaſure in unrighteouſneſs. There are few, if any, of thoſe ſins, againſt every one of which you heard a moſt terrible VVo denounced, that are not to be found among us; and if we will not forſake them, no not when God hath begun to ſtrike, as well as threaten, he may in his righteous judgment, after all his Plagues on our bodies and goods, inflict the greateſt of all upon our minds, and ſtrike ſuch obſtinate Sinners with an incurable blindneſs.

V.

Now what ſigns are there, that we ſee, of our repentance and turning from thoſe evil wayes; in which we have proceeded to ſuch an heighth of provocation? what do we do, to prevent thoſe judgments, which we ſay we fear? VVhat effectual courſe do we take, to avert ſuch an utter deſtruction, as the *Iſraelites* brought upon themſelves by their continued wickedneſs? You have ſeen in too many things, how little difference there is between us, and that People. The Lord their God, I have ſhown you, caſt them into a moſt excellent Order and admirable Form of Government and Religion; in which we have been praiſed by the Nations round about us. Many wonderful deliverances He granted them, from thoſe that hated them; wherein He hath not been wanting to us neither. And all the Bible ſhows how ungrateful they proved to him; as all the VVorld knows, and Poſterity I believe, will be aſtoniſhed at it, how wickedly we have behaved our ſelves ſince He hath done the moſt marvelous things for us. And therefore He hath made us, you have now heard, as like in our puniſhments, as we have made our ſelves like them, in our ſins.

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And, for any thing yet appears, to complete the parallel, we are like to imitate them in their impenitence and hardneſs of Heart, notwithſtanding all Gods Judgments upon them: And ſo at laſt to fall under that heavy ſentence which the Prophet pronounces in the next Chapter, againſt ſuch a croſs-grain'd and gainſaying people.

Read it, and be ſeriouſly affraid leſt it ſhould be our portion. *Iſa. 6. 10, 11, 12. Make the heart of this People fat, and make their Ears heavy, and ſhut their Eyes, leſt they ſee with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and underſtand with their Hearts, and convert and be healed. Then ſaid I, Lord, how long? And he anſwered, until the Cities be waſted without Inhabitant, and the Houſes without Man, and the Land be utterly deſolate; and the Lord have removed Men far away, and there be a great forſaking in the midſt of the Land.* O dreadful doom! VVhat means do we uſe, that none like it may paſs upon us? wherein do we difference our ſelves from that rebellious Generation? what tokens are there, that we intend to become more obedient to the Voice of the Lord our God; and to meet him in the way of his Judgments, by a timely repentance?

We talk indeed often of repenting, and acknowledge that we ſhall periſh, unleſs we repent: but ſtill every Man goes on in the way of his wicked heart, and doth not at all repent of the evil of his doings. After all the Plagues, the great Plagues, and of long continuance, which God hath ſent upon us; and after all our Faſtings and Humiliations, and Confeſſions that we are a wicked people who juſtly deſerve ſorer Judgments; we continue ſtill the very

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ſame that we were; unleſs this render us ſtill more wicked and juſtly obnoxious to his ſeverer diſpleaſure, that we will not amend thoſe things which we our ſelves confeſs are ſo provoking to his Divine Majeſty and ſo deſtructive to us.

We are met this day to confeſs we are very great Sinners; and to beſeech God to bleſs our Dread Soveraign and his Kingdoms, and to avert his Judgments from us, which our provocations deſerve: But how do we hope they ſhould be averted? meerly by our ſorrowful Confeſſions, and Prayers, and Supplications for Mercy? They rather accuſe us as obſtinate Offenders and may haſten his Judgments, if we do not what in us lyes to amend thoſe faults, which we ſay we are ſenſible will bring them upon us. Why then do we not ſeriouſly ſet upon this neceſſary, this ſaving work of thorow amendment, and reformation of our lives? Gods Anger we pretend to believe, is not yet quite turned away, but his Hand we fear is ſtretched out to give us another ſtroke: And the cauſe is viſible; no body denies, that the reaſon is, becauſe we do not repent. Why then do we not heartily ingage in that long neglected duty of repentance, which we know will do the buſineſs, and ſave us all this trouble, ſadneſs, ſorrow; and more blows which we may be ſure are prepared, for the back of ſuch Fools, as wilfully refuſe to go in the only way, which they ſee leads unto their Peace and Happineſs? Let me ask a few more queſtions.

I.

Are we indeed ſo fooliſh as to think, that God will be thus angry with us for nothing? that He can ſend one Plague after another, and make a miſerable De-

Deſtruction and ſpoil among the beſt of his Creatures here on Earth; when there is no cauſe for it, but meerly to ſatisfy his own Will? Doth He delight in the death of Sinners, or willingly grieve the Children of Men? Is it any contentment to him, to ſee us kill one another? to behold our Carcaſes fall by the peſtilence? to rot and corrupt the Fruits of the Earth, which He hath made it naturally to produce? Doth He love to turn a pleaſant Garden into a Wilderneſs? or to vex thoſe whom He hath made capable of ſo much pleaſure, with any other Miſchiefs and Calamities? We are all better inſtructed ſure, than to harbour any ſuch Opinion of the Juſt and Gracious Lord of all; ſince no good Man can take any delight in the meer Miſeries, Cryes, and woful Lamentations of the moſt inferiour Creatures.

II.

What then do we think of our Condition? Doth Gods Anger exceed the cauſe, though there be ſome reaſon for it? Is it diſproportionable to the provocation? And do we fancy him more diſpleaſed than he need? If we think his Juſtice and Goodneſs are ſo great, that they will not ſuffer, that He ſhould ſmite when there is no offence; we may be as confident they will forbid, that the ſtroke ſhould be above what the offence deſerves. He never ſends heavy Puniſhments for light Crimes; nor Common General Judgments for ſome Private Offences: But as Men ſin, ſo they ſuffer. When a great Calamity overſpreads a Nation, it is, we may be ſure, for a great and contagious Iniquity. And when thoſe Plagues are of long continuance, as *Moſes* ſpeaks, it is becauſe that Nation goes on ſtill in its Treſpaſſes.

III.

But though in thoſe days the Prophet ſaid, *Our God ſhall wound the Head of his Enemies; and the Hairy Scalp of ſuch a one as goeth on ſtill in his Treſpaſſes* (*Pſal.* 68. 21.) yet now perhaps you think there is no ſuch danger; and that all theſe are but fanciful Applications, which we make; when, from Gods proceedings againſt his ancient people, we put you in fear of further ſeverity, which you may expect, if you do not repent of your evil doings. Doth this Imagination riſe in your minds, to obſtruct the paſſage of theſe Truths to your hearts? Read then I beſeech you, and attend to the *Second Leſſon* appointed for Evening Prayer, this Day: and there the Apoſtle will teach you another Leſſon. 1 *Cor.* 10. 6. *Now theſe things* (ſpeaking of what befel the *Iſraelites*) *were our Examples; to the intent we ſhould not luſt after evil things, as they alſo luſted.* Nor be Idolaters, nor commit Fornication, nor tempt Chriſt, nor murmur, as (in the following Verſes) he ſhews they did to their coſt, and then concludes as he began, *V.* 11. *Now all theſe things hapned to them for Types: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the World are come.*

Why then do we not, without any delay, repent and turn to God? ſince it is ſo apparent, both that we are Offenders, great Offenders, in an high and inſolent manner; and that all thoſe woes (which I have ſo often mentioned) in the Prophet *Iſaiah* are a warning to us, to beware of theſe Sins, or preſently to renounce and forſake them all, when their danger is diſcovered to us; eſpecially when we have ſuffered already ſo ſadly for them, and felt ſuch heavy ſtrokes of

of God's Revenging Hand; which is not yet with drawn, but ſeems to be ſtretched out ſtill. Why I ſay, are we ſo ſenſleſs, ſo Fool-hardy, ſo deſperate as ſtill to live in all thoſe wickedneſſes, which are ſo hateful to God; though one Judgment have come tumbling upon another, and ſtill there are more behind? *For his Anger is not turned away* (let me repeat it, as the Prophet doth four or five times) *but his Hand is ſtretched out ſtill.*

To reſolve this queſtion, it will require a new Sermon, though no great pains to compoſe it. For I ſee the Reaſons (I think) of our impenitence as plainly, as if they were written with the Finger of God upon the Walls of your Church, as legibly as you read many Texts of Scripture there. And I am confident, one is (which is all I ſhall now mention) that there are great numbers of Offenders, who are not at all ſenſible, that it is the Hand of God which hath been ſtretched out againſt us, in ſo many Plagues; but impute all to ill Fortune and blind Chance, which hath fallen unluckily upon us. This was one of the things that helpt to undo the Houſe of *Iſrael* and *Judah*, as you have heard (*V.* 12. of this Chapter) *they regarded not the work of the Lord, nor conſidered the operation of his Hands.* And it will inevitably ruine all thoſe who walk on the ſame tract. For how ſhould ſuch Men repent, when *God is not in all their thoughts*, and they will acknowledge no Divine Hand in any of our Calamities, but ſtick meerly in lower Cauſes; above which they are reſolved not to look?

If any of you be in the leaſt infected with this dull Atheiſm, endeavour to cure that in the firſt place;

that a ſenſe of God awakened in your mind may cure all the reſt of your Diſeaſes, and move you to ſtand in fear of him, and of his judgments. You cannot but be afraid, I am ſure, if you ſee, and be ſenſible of the Hand of God in all that we have ſuffered. It will make you ſay as the Jaylor did, when he came in trembling before the Apoſtles, *What ſhall we do to be ſaved?*

What? but repent of this, that you have no more laid to heart the works of God, or ſo ſoon forgot the operation of his hands. Which I beſeech you now ſeriouſly conſider and ponder, and keep in mind; that you may be afraid to offend him any more, by going on ſtill in thoſe treſpaſſes, for which you have been ſo ſharply handled, and are in danger to be puniſhed with far greater ſeverity. If you do but mind how God hath proceeded in the method of his judgments againſt us, till they are riſen to high and dreadful degrees, you cannot but be awakened to think how diſmal the next ſtroke is like to be; and ſo *conſider, and fear, and do no more preſumptuouſly.*

I need not, if I were able, to ſet every one of your particular ſins, who are here preſent, before your Eyes: for God hath done it by his judgments, if they have at all awakened your drowſie Conſciences. They have called upon you to examine, and ſearch, and try your wayes; which if you have done, you ſoon found what was amiſs. There is none here, I verily believe, that hath loſt that diſcerning faculty, which diſtinguiſhes between good and evil. You very well know the one from the other; and are not grown ſo ſtupid, as to put light for darkneſs, and darkneſs for light. If you would

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but make as exact a difference in your Lives and Actions, as you are able to do in your Minds and Notions, all would be well with *you*; whatſoever becomes of thoſe who are paſt feeling, and therefore commit all iniquity with greedineſs.

As for ſuch ſenſeleſs Souls I know not well what to ſay of them, but muſt acknowledge it to be a very diſcouraging thought, when I conſider that they who are moſt concerned in what I have ſaid in this Sermon, are neither here, nor (it is to be feared) in any other place of Gods Worſhip and Service. They to whom the Character, which the Prophet gives of a People in a woful condition, moſt of all belongs, never ſo much as read it; nor will come to receive our Admonitions, nor think of humbling themſelves before God; no not when they are required and ſtrictly charged by his Majeſty ſo to do, as they tender Gods honour, and would avoid his juſt wrath and indignation againſt this Land. They make no more of the Kings Proclamation (how ſhould it be expected) than they do of Gods holy Word: but are, perhaps, at this very time feaſting and making merry, when we are faſting and teſtifying our ſorrow for our ſins. Theſe are the moſt forlorn Wretches of all others: a great part of the Plague of the Country where they live. We do well to ſeparate our ſelves from the Herd of ſuch Brutes, as have no fear, no apprehenſion of any thing that is future. You are to be commended for addreſſing your ſelves to God in this place; and I hope, when you go from hence, you will continue to apply your ſelves to him, in the moſt humble and earneſt deprecations of his diſpleaſure; reſolving

that

that you, for your part, will have no farther hand in provoking the Lord to anger againſt theſe Kingdoms; but endeavour rather to live the more ſtrictly, becauſe there are ſo many looſe-livers, of whoſe amendment there is little or no hope remaining.

And here it will be neceſſary to give you a caution; which it is eaſie to obſerve, but is not well followed. As the greateſt provokers of God to anger, will never, I doubt, think of atoning him: So they who have moſt power to reduce them to ſome ſenſe of their duty, will not, perhaps, imploy it ſufficiently, for the correction of them, and all other bold offenders. The Magiſtrates, I mean, in their ſeveral places, notwithſtanding the Laws for that purpoſe, will neglect, perhaps, by their execution, to give a check to open prophaneſs, and inſolent wickedneſs. The neglecters, or contemners, of ſo religious and neceſſary a duty, as that of this day, may eſcape the puniſhment which his Majeſty puts them in fear of in his Proclamation. And they who come to ſeduce the People from the eſtabliſhed Religion, may meet with no controle; though his Majeſty, and great Counſel, have declared, that their practiſes threaten the ſubverſion of Church and State. Many more ſuch enormities may be ſuppoſed; and ſhould it ſo fall out, as I have put the caſe; yet we muſt take great care of this plain Truth, which every body hath at their tongues-end, but few Men live by, That we neglect not our duty, becauſe others mind not theirs.

This is a very common and grievous ſin, which we are all to reſolve this day ſhall be amended. We are ever finding fault with others, more than our ſelves.

Some

Some are ſtill laying the blame upon the Court, that things are no better; others throw all the Dirt they can upon the Biſhops: there are ſober People, who have got an evil cuſtome of making complaints, on all occaſions, of the Fathers of the Church; and others cry out as loudly againſt the negligence of all the Officers of Juſtice: But in the mean time, do nothing themſelves, but what they ſhould not do, to remedy all that is amiſs.

Is this the way, think you, to avert Gods Judgments? to be continually arraigning the Vices of others, of which we have no knowledge; nay, judging at all adventures, thoſe who are our Superiours, and in the mean time letting our own apparent ſins eſcape without correction? Doth this look like the way of God, in which we hope to meet with his bleſſing? or are theſe raſh cenſures which we careleſly throw out, likely to redreſs any diſorders? Or can we find ſo little work at home, that we know not where to buſie our ſelves, but in other Mens concerns? Why do you ſuffer your ſelves to be thus groſly abuſed by the Devil, whoſe Art it is to divert you from that wherein you may do ſome good, by imploying you there where you have nothing to do; or if you had, have no power to make any amendment?

Grant, if it may be done without offence, that what you ſurmiſe is true; that there are faults in thoſe, whom out of reſpect to their high Office we would willingly excuſe: and which is more, that they will ſtill be in fault, and not do their duty as they ought (though I hope in God, they will not be truly charged with this guilt:) What then? Doth this

this authorize your irreverent ſpeeches of them? Are they like to do better, by your talking againſt them? Or doth it tend to any thing, but the diſgracing thoſe whoſe honour you ſhould preſerve, and the bringing all things into greater confuſion?

Come, come, if you deſign any good to your ſelves, or this Kingdom; ſet your ſelves to work in that place, where you have power to make things better. If you mean really to do what in you lies, to turn away Gods anger from us; turn then your zeal (if you have any) that way, where it may be profitably imployed, and work ſome amendment. There is ſomething I am ſure which every one of us may do, (and if we do not, ſhall be reproached out of our own Mouths, which are ſo cenſorious of other Folks negligence) to procure a bleſſing upon our Soveraign and his Kingdoms. In that let us imploy our moſt ſerious endeavours; and conſider impartially, are there not a number of things out of order at home? Do you not hear them calling upon your care and diligence to ſee them amended? Spend your zeal then firſt of all in that place, and let it be your buſineſs this day, when you are alone by your ſelves; as to bewail, between God and your own Souls, all the wickedneſs you know of abroad, to lament the neglects of thoſe who you ſee do not execute the Laws, to ſigh in ſecret for the faults of thoſe, which you ought not openly to diſcourſe of: So to deſcend into your own breaſts and make a ſearch there, what duty towards God or Man there is, which you neglect; and what commands there are, which you break. And when you have found them, ſet them before your Eyes in all their foul Circumſtances;

cumſtances; moſt ſorrowfully bewail them; expreſs your abhorrence of them; and faithfully reſolve to reform all your negligence and remiſſneſs, as well as your open diſobedience.

In this ſearch, and examination, you muſt be ſtrict and exact; and when you have ſifted your ſelves narrowly, and reſolved to amend all there; the next thing you have to do, is to amend all thoſe over whom you have any power, and who are committed to your charge. Your Children, I mean, and Servants, whom you ought to call upon to be more careful in their performance of the duties which they omit, and to break off thoſe ſins into which you ſee them run: reſolving, with *Joſhua*, that whatſoever others do, *You and your Houſe will ſerve the Lord.*

And next of all we ought to expreſs our deteſtation, as much as we are able, of thoſe leud courſes which we cannot reform. What hinders, for inſtance, but you may frown and ſhow your diſlike, when you hear a Gentleman, or one that is much your ſuperiour, rap out Oaths, and Blaſphemies, at every word, in his common diſcourſe? Is this any incivility or rudeneſs to him, in his Houſe or in your own? And what can detain you, if you have a love to God, from going to do your duty to him; when others are reſolved to omit it? Why ſhould you not leave any company, when you are called to Church? and not be ſo complemental, as to ſtay at home with thoſe who have no regard to the Divine Service; and for fear of diſobliging them, be guilty of an open neglect of Almighty God?

Nay, may not every one of you do very much for the preſervation of the true Religion; which Gods own right hand hath planted and eſtabliſhed among us? By ſtudying, that is more ſeriouſly, the grounds of it; by informing your ſelves what indeed, and none elſe, is the true ancient Catholick Apoſtolick Faith, which is ſo much talkt of; and eſpecially by endeavouring after an holy Converſation anſwerable thereunto. Cannot you be careful to principle your Children with all the diligence you can uſe, in the Religion here profeſſed; nay, and your Servants too, and all that are under your charge? what hinders you from bringing them conſtantly to Church along with you; and to ſee they ſtay there, and wander not to other places? And why cannot you examine them, what they have learnt? and remember them of that which was moſt remarkable; and read in the Evening of the Lords-Day, ſome good Book to them, that may inſtruct them in their Duty; and make them underſtand the difference between our Religion, and all that oppoſe it?

Theſe are proper things for you, in which to expreſs your zealous deſires of bringing things to a better paſs. And do not think to throw off the guilt from your ſelves, unleſs you ſet your hearts to do ſomething of this nature: nor imagine that it is none of your fault, that we are in ſo ill a condition, and in danger of a worſe; for if the thing be well ſcanned, there is never a one of us but is leſs or more to be charged with it. And, to ſpeak a little more particularly, I doubt our Religion ſuffers exceedingly

ly by this; that we do no more value it, nor thank God for it; nor ſtir up our ſelves to ſerve God with fervent ſpirits in it. For if we did more eſteem the *knowledge of God our Saviour*, and really look upon it as *Eternal Life*, and think *his ſervice the moſt perfect freedom* (as we pretend to do in our daily Prayers) we need not *fear the power of any Adverſaries*; but be confident God would hear our Prayers, when we ſay, *From our Enemies defend us, O Chriſt.* But alas! we are negligent and careleſs hearers and readers of his holy Word, and too many talk all the time the Chapters are read: as if that were not one end of our daily Aſſemblies, *to hear Gods moſt holy word*; as well as *to pray, and to ſet forth his moſt worthy praiſe, and thank him for his benefits.* Nay, all theſe, God knows, are but ſlightly performed: We ſee People talk out all the Hymns; and it is well if they can forbear whiſpering to one another while they pretend to be at their Prayers. A moſt dreadful prophanation! which muſt be amended, if we hope for any mercy. For God will not be moved by our conſtant ſhow of Religion and Devotion, if we want the truth and ſincerity of it: and how are we religious, how dwelleth the love of God in us, when we mind no more what we do in religious Offices?

Let me beſeech you again to reform theſe things thorowly; and inſtead of accuſing others of their careleſſneſs and negligence, gird up the Loins of your own minds, and go about that effectually, which you know you ought to do, and which you can do, by Gods aſſiſtance, for the healing of thoſe

Wounds, which are not yet cloſed, in the Body of this Church and Kingdom.

It is not too late, I hope; nay, I am ſure it is not; if we be in good earneſt. For, *the Lord*, as the Prophet *Jeremiah* ſpeaks, *is in the midſt of us, and we are yet called by his Name*; and if we will return to him with all our heart, and with all our ſoul, He will not leave us. So *Moſes* declared to the Children of *Iſrael*, long before all thoſe evils befell them, which I have related. *If when all theſe things are come upon thee, the Bleſſing and the Curſe, which I ſet before thee* (Deut. 30. 1, 2, &c.) *thou ſhalt call to mind, and return to the Lord thy God, and ſhalt obey his Voice in all that I command thee, thou and thy Children, with all thine heart and with all thy ſoul: Then the Lord thy God will turn thy Captivity, and have compaſſion upon thee, and will return and gather thee from among the Nations whither he hath ſcattered thee: and the Lord thy God* (V. 7.) *will put all theſe Curſes upon thine Enemies, and on them that hate thee, which perſecuted thee.*

We need not doubt but the ſame gracious Lord will do the very ſame for us, when we, in the vexation of our ſpirits, and the anguiſh of our ſouls, cry unto him; if we alſo turn unto him with all our heart, and with all our ſoul. Let us but thus reform our ſelves, and others, as far as our Power extends; and we may comfortably hope that our Prayers this Day, will become prevalent for all the Nation. Such Supplicants may do much, to the turning away Gods wrath from us; or to the obtaining

taining a forbearance, that it may not come in our dayes; or, if it do, that it may be (as it is admirably expreſſed in the Prayer after Sermon) effectual to our Correction, and not to our Deſtruction.

And if the Reformation of our Lives were any thing General throughout the Kingdom, I perſwade my ſelf, it might quite avert Gods Judgments; notwithſtanding the great and deſperate Provokers which will ſtill remain among us. They might only bear their own Burden; but He might graciouſly ſpare the Kingdom, for the ſake of thoſe many pious Supplicants that are in it. Though we ſtand ſo guilty before him, that *for our evil deeds, we do worthily deſerve to be puniſhed*; yet He might hear the earneſt cryes of ſuch Penitents, which ſue unto him, that *by the comfort of His grace we may be mercifully relieved.* He might have a regard to our conſtant *Litanies*, or Supplications, that He would *mercifully look upon our Infirmities*; (or afflictions) *and for the glory of his Name, turn from us all thoſe evils that we moſt righteouſly have deſerved:* Or if ſuch a Bleſſing could not be obtained, thoſe devout Souls would ſtill be able, *in all their troubles, to put their whole truſt and confidence in his mercy*; and rejoice, in the midſt of tribulations, in hope of his glory. To which God of his infinite mercy bring us, by ſuch wayes, and in ſuch Methods, as He ſees beſt: And let us never ceaſe to pray to him, according to the daily Collect for this Week, with which I conclude.

Almighty God, who ſheweſt to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of Righteouſneſs; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowſhip of Chriſt's Religion, that they may eſchew thoſe things that are contrary to their Profeſſion, and follow all ſuch things as are agreeable to the ſame, through our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, Amen.

FINIS.